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First Issue of New University Update (2012)

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Welcome Home, Cardinal Family!

As I walked around campus during orientation activities and events last week, I was reminded of how I felt on the first day of school when I was a freshman. It's been many years ago now, but I remember feeling excited, apprehensive, curious, shy, eager, and hopeful all at the same time. It was a heady mix of emotions.

That emotional rush was clearly in evidence here in Westerville. There's incredible energy in the air. Our "quiet peaceful village" is wide awake with the sounds of new and returning students, faculty, and staff - a beautiful diverse cacophony of new and familiar voices blending together to welcome the next generation of Cardinals to our dear Otterbein.

Class of 2016

If you listen closely, you will hear different languages and dialects as we welcome students from 68 out of 88 Ohio counties, 25 states, and 11 countries, including students recruited through our new institutional partnerships in China, Korea, Sweden, Japan, and Germany. The Class of 2016 has added 572 new freshmen to our Otterbein family, and we welcome a number of new faculty and staff as well. Please join me in welcoming all of our newcomers to campus.

There's much to celebrate!

As I shared at the Fall Conference, we begin the 2012-2013 school year after a summer of record-breaking fundraising results. The University exceeded its Annual Fund goal for the year, finishing at \$827,679, a new record in annual giving. In addition, the number of donors has increased 33% since 2009, with a total of 4,150 donors. Otterbein also received two major gifts in June from the Austin E. Knowlton Foundation, Inc., and the Pioneer Fund.

A \$1.5 million gift from the Austin E. Knowlton Foundation, Inc. in Cincinnati has secured the naming rights of the equine facility. The gift has been placed into an endowment for the support and maintenance of the Austin E. Knowlton Center for Equine Science and its programs. The Center will be dedicated during Otterbein's Homecoming celebration at 5:30 pm on Saturday, September 22. Please be sure to join us to celebrate another significant event in Otterbein's history.

In other good news, we have reviewed the 2012 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results. This survey is designed to assess the extent to which students engage in educational practices that are associated with high levels of learning and development. The survey is administered to freshmen and seniors at hundreds of institutions annually and questions include level of academic challenge, supportive campus environment, student-faculty interaction, and other research supported best practices.

Otterbein consistently performs in the top half or better compared to all other institutions nationally. Freshmen responses place Otterbein in the top 10% of the country on items related to both supportive campus environment and level of academic challenge. Examples of specific items where Otterbein freshmen and seniors rate their experience significantly higher than regional public and regional private universities include participation in community-based projects, working with faculty on activities other than coursework, attending an art exhibit or performance, and in their rating of their relationships with other students. Detailed survey results for Otterbein will be available on the Institutional Effectiveness Office website later this fall.

Communication

This **University Update** will be sent out every other week throughout the academic year to keep you posted on upcoming events, opportunities, and updates. If you want to learn more about budget, enrollment management, and advancement processes, or developing programs in academic affairs, student affairs, and information technology, check out the newsletter for upcoming discussions and presentations.

I hope the newsletter will also generate some two-way communication opportunities. If something prompts questions for you, drop me a note. Or if you want to suggest a topic that it would be helpful to address, let Kristi Robbins know. Through use of the Senate meeting updates and occasional open sessions, I'll try to cover as much as possible.

Also, please expect your chair or your dean or a Senate Committee member to share regular updates at school, department and staff meetings. Your ideas and suggestions for finding effective means of keeping the university community informed are welcomed and encouraged. We need your commitment to and your involvement in a community dialogue as we work toward creating our vision for the future.

The next edition of the **University Update** will be issued on Tuesday, September 4, and authored by Provost Vicki McGillin with a focus on Academic Affairs. On September 17, look for a **University Update** written by Rebecca Vazquez-Skillings, Vice President of Business Affairs, which will include results of the most recent compensation study, FY13 budget overview, and master plan update.

It's a new year – a fresh start to building a stronger foundation for the years ahead while honoring our history and traditions. Thank you, again, for your commitment and dedication to making Otterbein a great place to live, learn and grow. You are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
Kathy A. Krendl
President
Otterbein University